The Urban Link

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Director's Note

Dr. Jino Distasio, Director

On May 3rd and 4th, ten Canadian Cities embarked on the second annual Jane's Walk. The walks were the idea of the Centre for City Ecology, a Toronto-based think tank influenced by Jane Jacobs. What is unique about the walks is that they were all run by volunteer organizations and passionate residents who wanted to showcase their neighbourhoods. In Winnipeg's first year, there were thirteen walks that included a range of inner city neighbourhoods as well as the outlying historic neighbourhood of St. Norbert.

The Institute of Urban Studies provided support for the Winnipeg walks, and I had the opportunity to lead one in my neighbourhood, Riverview. How amazing it was to walk up Osborne Street on a crisp but sunny morning, coffee in hand, expecting to lead a dozen or brave souls along a busy street…and to be greeted by a throng of 70! The group was excited to hear about the history of a unique neighbourhood but at the same time many members of the group shared their own experiences or politely "corrected" me on several occasions for getting a name or event wrong. While some spoke of the positive attributes of place, some highlighted the challenges that still face many communities. But this is what the walks were intended to do: bring people together to share stories and talk about not only the past but the future.

What was so inspiring about the walks was to hear from long-time residents details you wouldn't learn anywhere else. On my walk for example, a spry septuagenarian vividly recalled the size of the skating rink that was once on Osborne, and that the first community club was really a donated boxcar for the rail shops that once employed hundreds of workers in the area. Stories like these brought people together, and it was rewarding to know that Winnipeg residents who attended the walks were just as passionate as the tour leaders. More so: Not even a snowstorm on the Sunday could keep people away!

Jane's Walks are intended to be about all these things and more. But in the end, great cities and the places within them are not "planned:" They are cultured through the acts of citizens who take time to care about them and invest their collective effort in keeping them rich and diverse. As Jane wrote: "Our cities contain all degrees of success and failure."

Participants in the Jane's Walks learned things about Winnipeg neighbourhoods that one simply does not get to appreciate when driving by. Jane's Walks are about being able to reconnect with the streets and sidewalks that we have forgotten about in an era of big-box shops and nondescript subdivisions.

See you in the neighbourhood!

(For more on the walks that took place across the country go to www.janeswalk.net).

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Articles

Dr. Earl A. Levin Archive Launch

During his long and influential career in city planning, Dr. Earl A. Levin was the Director of Planning for the Province of Saskatchewan; Director of city planning for Metropolitan Winnipeg; the head of the City Planning program at the Faculty of Architecture at the University of Manitoba; a Senior Fellow at the Institute of Urban Studies at the University of Winnipeg; and the President of the Town Planning Institute of Canada (now the Canadian Institute of Planners). As both a consultant and a public sector planner Earl Levin was involved in some of Winnipeg's most important planning processes, including Neeginan and the Core Area Initiative.

Now Dr. Levin has donated his personal papers to the Institute of Urban Studies. The collection includes over 100 speeches and original articles on a wide range of planning topics, as well as correspondence, planning reports and extensive newspaper and magazine clippings.

On Monday, March 24th, 2008, IUS hosted a reception at Menno Simons College to thank Dr. Levin for his donation. Almost 40 people were on hand as Dr. Lloyd Axworthy welcomed visitors and thanked Dr. Levin for his donation. Guests included former City of Winnipeg Commissioners Bernie Wolfe and Tom Yauk.

Dr. Levin delivered a short speech in which he pointed out that both his initial foray into the academic world (at the former United College) and now what will likely be his final contribution to academia—his archive—are at the same place. He also had a great deal to say about the nature of city planning:

> "In the term 'city planning' the word 'city' is commonly understood to refer only to the group of the structures built on a particular area of land in which people live and pursue the activities which comprise their lives. The term refers only to the physical structures and their functional relationship to one another. The relationships of the occupants of one of the units to those of a neighboring unit is generally beyond the context of the terms 'city and 'city planning.' But these inter-human relationships are an essential component of city life and it is these relationships which are the materials of the academic component of the city planning function…This is the essential difference between city planning as it is practices today and a broader humanly oriented practice which does not yet exist but if it did might be termed 'urban community planning.'"

The collection is housed in the IUS library in a series of boxes marked with a plaque. To see a list of the contents of the archive, check out the indexed on the IUS website at http://ius.uwinnipeg.ca/earl_aaron_levin4.html. Future additions to the website will include podcast interviews with Dr. Levin and subject index to his papers.

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Remixing Suburbia?

By Michael Dudley

Canada has always been a nation of immigrants, and the latest Statistics Canada figures reveal that Canada is home to more immigrants than any time since the 1930s. What is remarkable, however, about the current stream of immigration is that most newcomers are settling in Canada's suburbs. While this may seem quite in line with the aspirations of mainstream Canadian society, the trouble with this trend is that suburbs are peculiarly unsuited to absorb newcomers because they lack the interactive spaces of older urban areas. Why is this important for immigrants? As Anthony Reinhart puts it in the Globe & Mail,

> *'It's critically important that, as a society, we need to construct pathways for people in the various language groups to move in and out of their own community, as well as make it easier for people who are outside of those communities to move in,' said Tung Chan, head of a Vancouver-based immigrant settlement agency. 'We need to create more chances for people to interact, for people to dialogue and for people to understand each other.'*

This theme is picked up by the organization CEO for Cities, which says that what is needed for many reasons, are Remixing Cities that allow people to:

> *...mix and mingle, and share and combine ideas from different vantage points and traditions. That mixing takes place on and in shared infrastructures and spaces that bring people together from parks and markets to festivals and debating chambers, churches and universities... Without shared values and meeting places, cities can fray into disconnected and distrusting communities. Investing in shared infrastructures is not a drain on innovation. In cities, it is a prerequisite for it.*

When such infrastructure does not exist, and when people of diverse cultures and ethnicities only encounter each other in unusual circumstances rather than in everyday encounters, distrust and animosities born of prejudices are surely to follow. This is portrayed to devastating effect in the 2004 Paul Haggis film ***Crash***, which peeled back the layers of a society steeped in racism—but subtly showed how this pathology is exacerbated by the built environment. The characters are so often sealed in their cars—and their respective enclaves of wealth and poverty—and as a consequence are unable to engage in the kinds of casual interactions necessary for a functioning society. Indeed, this is revealed in the very first line spoken in the movie by a character who has just been in a car accident: *"'It's the sense of touch. In LA nobody touches you. I think we miss that sense of touch so much we crash into each other.'"*

The challenges for Canada and other nations dealing with large numbers of newcomers are many. But surely one priority must be to find ways to create a physical environment that can facilitate integration; and this is just as true for immigrants as it will be for our burgeoning population of seniors citizens as well. Suburbia—where so many of us now live—is simply incapable in its present form of meeting the range of human needs that will be demanded of it. Our suburban areas are going to need many more services and amenities that can be reached on foot. More than that, they will need gathering places, not just enormous parking lots at the power centre near the freeway. In short, suburbia is going to need to become a lot more diverse physically in order to maintain the ever more diverse society that Canada is becoming.

[1] Reinhart, A. "A Nation of Newcomers" *The Globe & Mail* December 5, 2007 at 1:55 PM EDT

[2] See http://www.ceosforcities.org/rethink/research/files/RemixingCities.pdf

Work on Recent Projects

Working Poor and Energy Poverty

The Institute is preparing a paper for Human Resource and Social Development Canada on the Working Poor and Energy Poverty. This is going to be a literature review examining the rapidly changing face of "housing affordability," focusing on volatile heating and energy prices.

Churchill Manitoba – Sustainability Plan

The Institute and several departments at the University of Winnipeg are working with the Town of Churchill on a new sustainability plan for the town, focusing on ways to address major areas of concern, including waste disposal and heating.

Portage la Prairie – Social Plan

"Now that it is a part of the provincial Neighbourhoods Alive! Strategy, the Town of Portage la Prairie needs to develop its strategic plan. To support this, the Portage Community Network has asked the Institute to assist them with the development of a social plan. This will involve researching social conditions to develop a set of baseline data and to consult with stakeholders to identify the town's most important social issues."

The Active Living Coalition of Older Adults

ALCOA has contracted the Institute of Urban Studies to: (1) develop a background paper on strategies to address the social isolation of older adults and encourage them to become active members of their community, (2) lead a full-day workshop on the topic of social connectedness and active living (held on March 13, 2008, at the Wellness Centre in Winnipeg), and (3) report on the findings of the workshop and establish next steps and actions.

The Manitoba Seniors and Healthy Aging Secretariat

The Secretariat contracted the Institute of Urban Studies to carry out a range of research and facilitation/consultation activities to further the issue of transportation for older Manitobans. The objectives of the project include the development of an action plan through consultation, a review of best practices, and a particular focus on issues of mobility for older adults in rural Manitoba.

What's New at IUS

Staffing News

This past academic term, ***Dr. Jino Distasio*** and ***Michael Dudley*** taught courses for the city planning department at the University of Manitoba. Dr. Distasio taught the first year graduate course in housing, while Mr. Dudley taught thesis/practicum preparation.

This summer ***Dr. Gina Sylvestre*** will be teaching two courses in Geography at the University of Winnipeg:

1) Introduction to Human Geography I: course focuses on the role of culture in determining geographical patterns and landscapes.

2) Introduction to Human Geography I and II: course examines population change and migration, economic activity, urbanization and levels of development.

Michael Dudley is contributing a chapter to a forthcoming book from Springer publications, called *Multimedia & Planning: An Exploration of the Next Frontier*, edited by Leonie Sandercock and Giovanni Attili. This edited collection will explore the potential of multimedia to enhance and transform city planning practices, processes, teaching, and research. Dudley's chapter will deal with the use of film in teaching planning concepts, specifically environmental psychology.

Jillian Golby-Borsa *gave birth to her second child, Dallas Golby-Borsa, on April 20th. The family is all doing well.*

Lesley Gaudry *will be filling in for Jillian during her absence. We welcome back Lesley Gaudry, who is also working for the Campus Sustainability Office.*

Canada Research Chair in Urban Change and Adaptation

Canada Research Chair Report

"The households in the study face high levels of poverty."

Winnipeg Refugees Face Difficult Housing Challenges

Housing is a central component of the settlement experience of refugees. A positive housing situation can facilitate many aspects of integration. Unaffordable, crowded, unsafe housing can cause disruptions in the entire settlement process.

A two-year CRC study of recently arrived refugees in the City of Winnipeg illustrates the significant housing challenges they face. In the first year 75 households who had been in the City a year or less were interviewed. Fifty-five of these households were re-interviewed a year later. The research findings highlight the housing challenges the households face in the first year followed by considerable improvement, but continuing problems, in the second year.

The households in the study face high levels of poverty. In the first year the average annual income of the refugee households was $22,374: less than half the average household income of $53,176 in the City. Eighty-six percent of households fell below the poverty line as defined by Statistics Canada's Low Income Cut-Off. With an average rent of $566 per month, the average household spent 33 percent of their gross income (before tax) on shelter. Fifty-one percent of households spent thirty percent or more, while twelve percent spent fifty percent or more. Spending thirty percent or more of before tax income on shelter is considered excessive, leaving too little money for other basic necessities (Table 1).

Table 1: Refugee Housing Circumstances: Year One to Year Two Change

Indicator	*Year One*	*Year Two*	*Change*
Average Income	$ 22,374	$ 29,357	+31 %
Households in Poverty	86 %	65 %	-21 %
Shelter-to-Income Ratios			
Paying 30% or more	51 %	22 %	-29 %
Paying 50% or more	12 %	2 %	-10 %
Proportion of Crowded Households	47 %	36 %	-11 %

Source: Study Sample

Research Chair Report continued on page 7

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Refugee households are much larger than Winnipeg households in general—3.6 compared to 2.4 persons per household. They require larger units but the Winnipeg rental market provides few three and four bedroom units, particularly at prices refugees can afford. Hence it is not surprising that 47 percent of refugee households lived in crowded circumstances.

In addition to affordability and crowding problems households faced other housing related challenges. They were highly mobile as they searched for better living circumstances. In the first year 93 percent had lived in more than one place, 25 percent in more than three. The average length of tenure was thirteen weeks—not a situation conducive to integration. One quarter did not feel safe in their neighbourhood and a similar proportion felt their housing was unsafe. The same proportion felt their home contributed to health problems. Although only a quarter felt landlords and caretakers were unhelpful, twenty percent did not know their rights and responsibilities as tenants and 45 percent had no idea of their landlords' rights and responsibilities. Close to sixty percent did not plan to live in their current residence long. The same proportion wanted to move to another neighbourhood. One could not characterize them as a settled group of people in housing circumstances that contributed to successful re-settlement.

A year later their housing circumstances had improved considerably. Average household income increased by 31 percent to $29,357. The proportion in poverty declined to 65 percent. Improved employment circumstances contribute to this change as 66 percent of those interviewed were employed in Year Two compared to 42 percent a year earlier. These changes led to much improved housing affordability as the average shelter-to-income ratio fell to 25 percent—only 22 percent were paying thirty percent or more and two percent more than fifty percent.

Only 36 percent of households were crowded although there was no appreciable decline in household size. Other improvements included a growing satisfaction with dwelling size and design, building and unit safety, greater satisfaction with landlords and caretakers and an improved knowledge of both tenant and landlord responsibilities. A noticeable change that was contrary to these positive trends was a growing dissatisfaction with the condition of their home and with repairs not being made in a timely fashion. This may reflect an improved understanding of the standard they can expect and less reluctance to express their concerns.

Housing trajectories for refugees are positive, particularly housing affordability because of improving employment and income circumstances. However, many challenges remain and if successful re-settlement and integration are defined as achieving circumstances similar to those of the host population, the refugees still have to experience considerable change and improvement.

T. Carter, C. Polevychok, A. Friesen and J. Osborne

The Centre for Sustainable Transportation announces its new Research Director — Terry Zdan, B.A., M.E.Des.

Terry has been working in sustainable development for about three decades. Terry assisted planning the initial Calgary Light Rail Transit network, partially in preparation for the 1988 Winter Olympic Games. He co-authored ***Assessing Sustainable Development: Principles in Practice*** with the International Institute for Sustainable Development. He prepared the Barometer of Sustainability application in the 1998 Manitoba State of Environment Report. Terry has been working on sustainable transportation issues, including climate change and urban transportation, with Manitoba Infrastructure and Transportation since 2000. He is the Project Manager for the GHG baseline and assessment studies required for the Urban Transportation Showcase Program WinSMART project for the City of Winnipeg. He has managed and assisted teams in the implementation of international and local advanced vehicle and alternative fuel events, including bio-fuels, electric hydrogen and solar vehicles, and plug-in hybrid technologies.

The CST announces a new Research Assistant — Karin Kliewer, B.A., MCP (Can)

Karin is entering her second year of graduate studies in City Planning at the University of Manitoba. She completed undergraduate studies in international development and conflict resolution. Her graduate studies interests are focusing on the relationships between humans and urban environments, and her thesis topic is investigating the power dynamics associated with cycle transportation. Karin has worked in community development, project management, and administrative capacities in both non-profit and academic institutions. She is Membership Co-coordinator on the Board of Directors for Bike to the Future, a Winnipeg cycling advocacy organization. She brings a valuable research and analytical capacity in sustainable and people-centred development to the CST.

The CST announces a new Research Assistant — Jodi Binder, B.Sc. (Can)

Jodi is a research assistant completing a B.SC in Statistics at the University of Winnipeg. She brings to the Centre a complementary skill set in quantitative analysis and survey methods. Jodi is the lead researcher focusing on greenhouse gas emissions generated from mobile urban transportation sources. She is also a key member on the Centre's team currently researching vehicle idling and driving behaviour.

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Homelessness

Special Issue
Guest Editor: Tracy Peressini

Articles

São Paulo: des tactiques pour habiter la rue
Christian Pierre Kasper

Can You be Healthy on the Street?: Exploring the Health Experiences of Halifax Street Youth
Jeff Karabanow, Sharon Hopkins, Steve Kisely, Joanne Parker, Jean Hughes, Jacqueline Gahagan and Leslie Anne Campbell

Employment Training for Street Youth: A Viable Option?
Jennifer L. Robinson and Stephen W. Baron

What Happens Over Time: Researching Homelessness Longitudinally
Fran Klodawsky, Tim Aubry, Rebecca Nemiroff, Alette Willis

Comparing Public Opinion and Prevalence of Homelessness in Canada to the United States
Karen L. Hobden, Carolyn J. Tompsett, Amanda K. Fales, and Paul A. Toro

Conceptualizing optimum homeless shelter service delivery: The interconnection between programming, community, and the built environment
Micheal Shier Christine A. Walsh John R. Graham

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Principal Editor: Marc Vachon

Articles

Placing Social Policy? Reflections on Canada's New Deal for Cities and Communities
Neil Bradford

Density, Size, Dispersion: Towards Understanding the Structural Dynamics of Mid-Size Cities
Trudi Bunting, Pierre Filion, Heidi Hoernig, Mark Seasons, Jeff Lederer

Local Urban Form Measures Related to Land-use and Development Period: A Case-study for Halifax, Nova Scotia
Hugh Millward and Guang Xue

Saint-Laurent: transformations urbaines d'une ville de banlieue Quels changements dans la relation centre/ périphérie?
Sébastien Darchen and Claire Poitras

Les trajectoires résidentielles des nouveaux immigrants à Montréal : Une analyse longitudinale et conjoncturelle
Nong Zhu et Xavier Leloup

Linking Social Exclusion and Health: Explorations in Contrasting Neighbourhoods in Hamilton, Ontario
Kathi Wilson, John Eyles, Susan Elliott, Sue Keller-Olaman, Diane Devcic

Finance, Insurance and Real Estate Firms and the Nature of Agglomeration Advantage Across Canada and Within Metropolitan Toronto
Stephen P. Meyer

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For more information visit our website at: http://ius.uwinnipeg.ca/cjur_browse_archive.html

Winnipeg Inner-City Research Alliance (WIRA)

By Anita Friesen, Community Liaison Director

Updates on Community-based Research

The following research reports are now available on the WIRA website: http://ius.uwinnipeg.ca/WIRA/wira_publications.htm

Echoes of Inner City Voices
Mike Maunder and Virginia Maracle with Tom Carter, Chesya Polevychok and Tom Janzen

Financing Social Enterprise: A Scan Of Financing Providers In The Manitoba, Saskatchewan And Northwestern Ontario Region Financing Social Enterprise: A Scan Of Financing Providers In The Manitoba, Saskatchewan And Northwestern Ontario Region
Wanda Wuttunee (University of Manitoba), Russ Rothney (Assiniboine Credit Union), Lois Gray (University of Manitoba) November, 2007

Routine Activities, Opportunity and Crime In The Inner City: Investigating The Link Between Monthly Income Assistance Payments and Crime In Winnipeg
A research report by Steven A. Kohm, with assistance provided by Gerard Allard, Kirk Fuhr, Michael Weinrath, Teresa Chernecki, Chantal English and Kurt Sargent

Linking, Learning, Leveraging: Social Enterprises, Knowledgeable Economies and Sustainable Communities
WIRA is a partner in "Linking, Learning, Leveraging"(LLL), a five-year research initiative in Saskatchewan, Manitoba and Northern Ontario which supports research partnerships of community groups and academics who combine their strengths, expertise and resources to work towards a greater understanding of the social economy.

Three research projects were recently approved and will soon be underway:

Beyond Local: Building Urban-Rural Solidarity Through Food Relationships
Research Partners: Stephane McLachlan, Jo-Lene Gardiner

When Every Day Brings a New Emergency: Building Community Resilience to Disaster in a High-Risk Neighbourhood
Research Partners: Judith Harris, Kate Sjoberg, Patricia Masniuk

Mapping Ethno-cultural Organizations in Brandon and Rural Manitoba
Research Partners: Robert Annis, Hope Roberts, Jill Bucklaschuk, Alison Moss

There are five community-based Social Economy research projects wrapping up. Watch for the final reports coming to the website soon:

- ***Community Research Hub: A Case Study in Social Economy***
Research Partners – Judith Harris, Joan Hay, Sandra Leone
- ***Building a Policy Framework for CED and the Social Economy***
Research Partners – Brendan Reimer, John Loxley
- ***Eat Where You Live: Building a Social Economy of Local Food in Western Canada*** Research Partners – Joel Novek, Paul Chorney, Kim Bailey
- ***Building a Tax Policy Framework to Enable Co-operative Development***
Research Partners – Cindy Coker, Chris Clamp
- ***Harvest Moon Society Marketing Cooperative: Building Social Capital Through an Alternative Food Economy***
Research Partners – Stephane McLachlan, Jo-Lene Gardiner

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For more details about these projects and the larger initiative see: http://ius.uwinnipeg.ca/WIRA/wira_social%20economy.htm